

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 03465 031533Z
ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 ACDA-12 CIAE-00 INR-10 IO-14
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-08 NRC-07 SOE-02 DODE-00
DOE-11 SS-15 SP-02 CEQ-01 PA-02 PM-05 AID-05
/120 W

-----104556 040020Z /72

R 031252Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9947
INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

UNCLAS NEW DELHI 3465

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TECH, IN, US
SUBJECT: PRESS COMMENT ON INDO-US NUCLEAR RELATIONS

1. THE MARCH 3 EDITION OF THE "TIMES OF INDIA"
CARRIED THE FOLLOWING EDITORIAL ENTITLED "ANSWER
TO US BULLYING." BEGIN QUOTE: THE TARAPUR FUEL
QUESTION IS A CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF PLAIN OLD ARM-
TWISTING. THE FACTS ARE SIMPLY STATED. THE CON-
TRACT BETWEEN THIS COUNTRY AND THE UNITED STATES
IN REGARD TO THE TARAPUR ATOMIC POWER STATION
SPECIFICALLY STATES THAT THE REQUIRED QUANTITIES
OF ENRICHED URANIUM WILL BE SUPPLIED PERIODICALLY
BY THE U.S. AND THAT THE USED UP FUEL, WHICH IS
HIGHLY RADIOACTIVE, WILL BE BOUGHT BACK BY THAT
COUNTRY. WASHINGTON HAS NOW GONE BACK ON BOTH
THE CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS. DURING THE TALKS IN
JANUARY BETWEEN PRESIDENT CARTER AND MR. MORARJI
DESAI ON THIS ISSUE, INDIA'S CASE WAS CLEARLY
STATED AND MR. CARTER, ALTHOUGH CONCEDING THE
DIFFERENCES, APPEARED TO BE READY TO FULFILL THE
OBLIGATIONS BY PROMISING TO SUPPLY THE FUEL (AT
LEAST SEVEN TONNES ARE URGENTLY NEEDED). BUT AS
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A RESULT OF PRESSURE FROM THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY
COMMISSION, NOT A GRAM OF THE URANIUM HAS YET
REACHED THIS COUNTRY. THERE IS TALK NOW THAT THE
SHIPMENTS MAY BE INDEFINITELY DELAYED. ON TOP OF
IT THERE IS THE IRRITANT OF STORAGE FACILITIES FOR
THE SPENT FUEL. BECAUSE THE U.S. HAS FAILED TO
TAKE BACK MORE THAN 200 TONNES OF THE SPENT FUEL

IN THE LAST SIX YEARS, STORING THE MATERIAL HAS BECOME A PROBLEM. THAT HAS RESULTED IN A SIZABLE REDUCTION IN THE POWER STATION'S OUTPUT. CLEARLY THIS NON-COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF THE U.S. INDICATES A GROSS VIOLATION OF ITS CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS.

2. BUT DOES THAT MEAN THAT THIS COUNTRY HAS NO CHOICE IN THE MATTER? DO WE HAVE TO DEPEND SO HELPLESSLY ON THE U.S. PLAYING ITS OWN GAME AND BE PARALYSED INTO IMMOBILITY? THE PRIME MINISTER MAY OR MAY NOT BE JUSTIFIED IN CONTINUING TO NURSE THE HOPE THAT WASHINGTON WILL RESPECT ITS WORD. THAT DOES NOT PRECLUDE ACTION ON OUR PART. FOR, IT IS NOT THAT THERE IS NO POSSIBLE ANSWER TO SUCH BULLYING. THAT IS WHY MR. DESAI'S RHETORICAL QUESTIONS "WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT? CAN WE GO TO COURT?" ARE SURPRISING. SINCE THE U.S. HAS DELIBERATELY BROKEN ITS PLEDGED WORD, ITS SOLEMNLY SIGNED CONTRACT, WE ARE AUTOMATICALLY AND LEGALLY RELEASED FROM OUR COUNTER-OBLIGATIONS. WE SHOULD NOW CONSIDER OURSELVES FREE TO REPROCESS THE SPENT FUEL RODS AND MAKE GOOD USE OF THE 400 KILOGRAMS OF PLUTONIUM THAT CAN BE EXTRACTED FROM THEM. THIS PLUTONIUM CAN BE USED AND MIXED WITH NATURAL URANIUM OXIDE IN SPECIALLY FABRICATED RODS TO POWER TARAPUR.

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COMPUTER STUDIES MADE BY THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY HAVE SHOWN THAT WITH SOME MODIFICATIONS TARAPUR CAN USE THE NEW FUEL. THIS WOULD AT ONCE SOLVE BOTH THE PROBLEMS: OF SHORTAGE OF ENRICHED URANIUM AND OF WHAT TO DO WITH THE SPENT FUEL. THAT IS THE PROPER AND COURAGEOUS ATTITUDE FOR ANY SOVEREIGN NATION TO ADOPT IN ANSWER TO SHAMELESS ATTEMPTS AT ARM-TWISTING.

END QUOTE.

3. THE "INDIAN EXPRESS" EDITORIALIZED THE SAME DAY ALONG SIMILAR LINES.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, NUCLEAR AGREEMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978NEWDE03465
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780098-0568
Format: TEL
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197803110/aaaadozz.tel
Line Count: 107
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: cf9c24b9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION OES
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3128600
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PRESS COMMENT ON INDO-US NUCLEAR RELATIONS
TAGS: TECH, SOPN, MNUC, IN, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/cf9c24b9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014